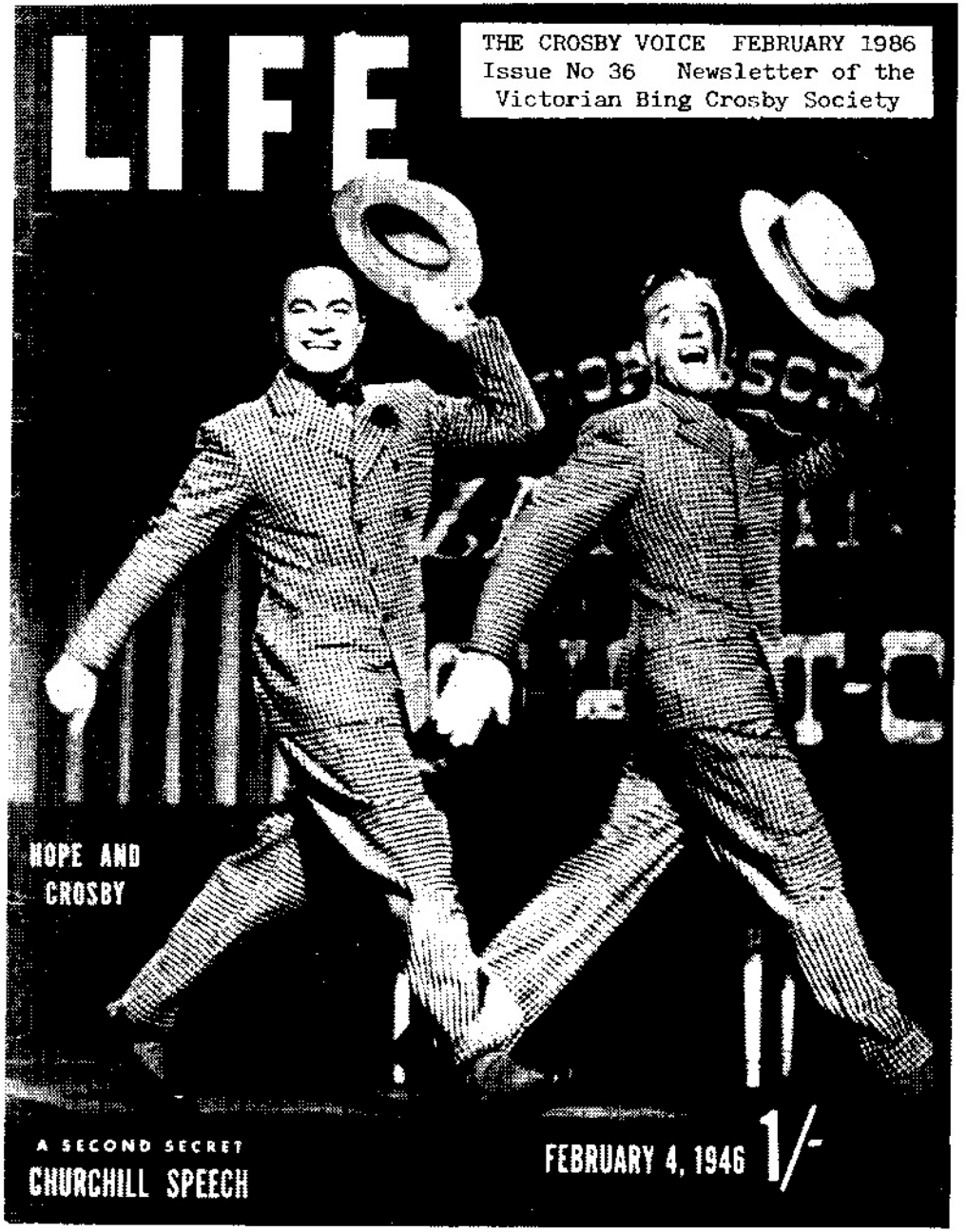
THE CROSBY VOICE FEBRUARY 1986
Issue No 36 Newsletter of the
Victorian Bing Crosby Society



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Hello again,

Well, almost on time, here we are with the first edition of The Crosby Voice for 1986. I think that we've managed to pull off another miracle because we've found enough interesting material to fill some 60 pages.

Let me start by thanking all thouse members who sent Christmas greetings. Your kind wishes were very nice to receive.

The cover of this issue comes, as you can see, from an original issue of LIFE from the mid-1940's. In our 'From Out of the Past' feature at the end of this magazine, we feature the cover story - a review of the 'latest' road movie - 'Road to Utopia'.

We also have a booking form for our annual BBQ which takes place on Sunday March 16th. If you wish to attend, you must return your form by March 7th so that catering can be finalized. See page 4 for details.

Vern Taylor finally comes to the end of his excellent series 'HAIL KMH' in this issue. I know from your letters that many of you will be sad to see it finish, but happily, Vern has promised to write further articles for future issues of the Crosby Voice. If you'd like to tell Vern how much you enjoyed the series, why not drop him

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THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY, P.O. Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205.

Affiliated with the Queensland Bing Crosby Society, PO Box 92 Ferny Hills, Queensland, Australia 4055.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: President - Bob Machliss. Vice-President - Ken Orren. Treasurer - Keith Dorman. Secretary - Les Saynor.

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a line? His address is: PO Box 475, University Station, Portland Oregon 97207-0475 USA.

By a happy co-incidence, we recently came across an article on the recently formed New York Museum of Broadcasting. This has been featured immediately after Vern's article and you will realize how appropriate it is when you come to it. Although Bing is not mentioned in the article, you can be sure he is represented in the museum.

Volume 5 of The Chronological Bing Crosby is here and available to members of the Club. You can read about it on page 36, whilst later in the magazine, we tell you the record shops around Australia stocking the discs.

This Society contributed for the second year running towards an advertisement in Variety on the anniversary of Bing's death. You can see the ad on page 40 of this magazine.

I recently picked up the British edition of the Reader's Digest version of Call Me Lucky. The cover and some of the illustrations are reproduced starting on page 43. By the way, for those who are interested, the British edition differs from the US edition in that the story is placed towards the back of the book.

Frank Smith very kindly supplied us with a photostat of an article on Bing and Christmas which appeared in the New York Post on December 27th last. I think you'll enjoy reading it.

By the way, if you have any article, new or old, which you think might be interesting for members, please loan them to us. We'll copy them and return them immediately. We'll even give you a photographic copy if you like. We especially want old cartoons featuring Bing.

This year we welcome our first two members from Sweden - Rune Edvardsson and Ragnar Uppman. Rune is interested in trading tapes with members and you can find out the details on page 54.

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society have sent us details of their year and they have a busier programme than we have! Les O'Donnell writes that Victorian Society members will be made very welcome if they happen to be in Queensland and you can check all the dates for the year on page 50 to see if your holidays co-incide in any way. Likewise, Queensland Society members should let us know when they are coming down so that we can prepare a special welcome.

Enough of that! Starting off as usual, we feature a rundown of Future Functions.

FUTURE FUNCTIONS

ANNUAL BARBECUE Sunday March 16th

Our annual barbecues are always well-attended and well enjoyed and this year will be no exception.

How does this sound for a rundown?

ROAST BEEF ON A SPIT
ROAST POTATOES
HEAPS OF SALADS
DELICIOUS DESSERTS
CRUSTY BREAD ROLLS
FRESH BREWED COFFEE

PLUS: LIVE MUSIC FOR DANCING OR LISTENING
SUPPLIED BY THE EVER-POPULAR BILL KERR
AND HIS JAZZ BAND.

All for the very reasonable (in these inflationary times) price of

$10.00 a head for members, and
$11.00 a head for non-members.

HOWEVER, IT'S ESSENTIAL THAT WE KNOW NOW IF YOU ARE COMING.

The reason for this is that we must tell the caterers how much food to prepare. Last year, quite a few people simply 'turned up' on the day which caused us all sorts of problems.

PLEASE SEND THE FULL AMOUNT NO LATER THAN MARCH 7TH TO:

Jim McManus
11/45 Oakleigh Road
Carnegie 3163

Jim is taking care of all the arrangements on this one so that yours truly has one less worry.

NOTE 1: Please make cheques to: "The Victorian Bing Crosby Society"

NOTE 2: The venue, as it has been for several years now, will be the home of Wally & Maureen Carson, 5 Parker Street, East Brighton. Starting time: 11.00am.

NOTE 3: B.Y.O. drinks and chairs.

NOTE 4: If you have any Crosby memorabilia - records, books, magazines, etc, that you would like to donate for our raffle, please bring them along on the day.

NOTE 5: An acceptance form is located at the centre of this magazine. Please mail it to Jim with your payment.

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FILM NIGHT - APRIL 28TH - "GOING MY WAY"

This film was number 4 on your list of Crosby movies that you most wanted to see - so we'll be screening it on April 28th.

As a companion piece, we have one for all you Eleanor Powell fans:

"ROSALIE" from 1937

Please remember our new venue:

The theatrette of the AMP Building,
corner Bourke & William Streets, City.

Starting time is 7.30 SHARP. Entry: Members $3, Member families $6, Students & Pensioners: $1 and non-members $5.

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PAST FUNCTIONS

FILM NIGHT - DECEMBER 2ND

Our final film evening for 1985 (and our final evening at the State Film Centre) had over 80 members and visitors turning up to see "COLLEGE HUMOUR" plus a last minute addition "EVERGREEN".

The latter was obviously the better movie although the Crosby voice was certainly heard at its peak. Evergreen demonstrated what a wonderful entertainer the late Jessie Matthews was and was a film well-appreciated by the audience.

Also on the evening, our wandering Treasurer Keith Dorman gave a report of his recent visit to the UK and the Crosby meeting he attended at Leeds.

Prizes on the night were won by Les Jones (twice!), Adrian Thomspon and Jean Kaye.

HAIL KMH!

BING CROSBY AND THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL

A PROFILE

OF

ONE OF

AMERICA'S

GREAT

RADIO

SHOWS

By

Vernon Wesley Taylor

PART 6:

THE DECLINE AND FALL

© Vernon Wesley Taylor 1986

The Kraft-Phenix Cheese Company began broadcasting musical entertainment in a serious way in June of 1933 with a programme they called the Kraft Musical RevueIt starred Al Jolson and featured the well-known music critic Deems Taylor, with Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra. Guests were generally chosen from the literary and light classic music fields. By October of that year, it had become the most popular show on the air, according to the Crossley System of Programme Rating. By this time it also featured members of the Whiteman organization, among them their girlsinger, Ramona; Jack Fulton, a tenor; Roy Bargy, a pianist, and another set of Rhythm Boys. While of course, Bing Crosby was no longer one of the Boys, Johnny Mercer was. Mercer also sang non-serious vocals as a soloist.

The sponsor, from the beginning an enthusiastic purchaser of radio time, seemed always to have been on the lookout for what their press releases termed'a young baritone' with 'rich low notes and unusually effective intonation'. When Mr Jolson began a new movie out in Hollywood, "Wonder Bar", in November, they signed up a Richard Lawrence, Jnr. from New Orleans and with him a girl-group, the Rhythm Girls, to give him a hand. Early the next year, when the immortal Jolson once again entrained west, Kraft once more hired a baritone. This one, interesting by today's standards but using a relatively common gimmick then, possessed a heavy Slav accent, wore a black domino mask and was touted as The Mystery Singer. In his 'rich timbre and magnificent range' he delivered heavy Russian songs to his quavering microphone. He disappeared shortly thereafter, when Jolson returned, leaving his mystery behind.

By now, the Revue had been changed to the Hall and had acquired even more popularity. Guests became a more balanced mix of personalities: William Gaxton of the Broadway musical comedy stages; Helen Jepson of the Metropolitan Opera; Jack Teagarden of the blues trombone; Cole Porter of songwriting glory; Mildred Bailey of wonderful Jazz renditions; George Gershwin, composer of symphonies-to-be...John Reber's excellent notion of using top-grade guest stars began about this time. Also, another baritone with a Rich Young Voice, Michael Bartlett, stood in for the paripatetic Jolson; without doubt, Mr Bartlett was blessed with the desired pear-shaped tones.

When Kraft finally found the singer that accurately conformed to their ideal and gave him their programme, Bing had been recently voted the 'leading male singer in America'. To sweeten the pot, they also brought

in Bob Burns as "The Radio Find of 1935". It proved to be a perfect combination.

IN THE BEGINNING JOHN PLATT CREATED THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL AND THE HALL WAS PAUL WHITEMAN. BUT DARKNESS CAME UPON THE FACE OF THE SHOW. THEN THE SPIRIT OF JOHN U. REBER MOVED OVER THE BROADCAST AND SAID "LET THERE BE A NEW YOUNG BARITONE WITH A RICH YOUNG VOICE TO GUIDE US" AND LO! THERE WAS BING CROSBY. AND JOHN U. REBER THEN SAID "LET THERE BE LIGHTNESS AND WARMTH AND GENTLE HUMOUR" AND BEHOLD! CARROLL CARROLL RE-APPEARED AS IF BY MAGIC. THE LISTENERS HEARD THAT IT WAS GOOD. INDEED IT WAS, VERY VERY GOOD.

Bob 'Bobby' Burns left to join Crosby in January, 1936, while Carroll began writing the comedy material about three months later. Whiteman, somewhat relieved that the pressures were off his broad back, turned once again to the concert stages. He would not do another steady series for radio until the mid-forties when he became one of the first big name disc jockeys (!).

Also in the beginning, in Hollywood, there was Murdo MacKenzie, the genial Caledonian with a lion's heart and, so said his colleagues, the best 'ear' in the business. Bing would one day jokingly refer to him as the 'Scotch Christ', in a moment of remarkable prescience, His association with Bing and KMH actually started on that First Day and ended with the final broadcast. The series was only a long start with Crosby, staying with him until the singer went into television.

"But you have it all wrong about that 'two hour' stuff" he told the writer. "That first one was only one hour." Oh? "That's right, and Bing didn't 'take over' from Whiteman at all." Oh? "No, he just went in and out of the show from New York. We had him on a broadcast loop. When he had a song or some dialogue, it was my job to cut him in". All those 1935 December broadcasts? "I cued him in just as New York cued themselves out; had to be pretty fast." Telephone cueing may not have been all that new by then, but it was a challenge to the young, enthusiastic NBC mixer.

On the technical level, quite apart from the 'talent', his job was fundamental. As the Sound Engineer, he was the one who 'turned the knobs'. His first important assignment to the studio's only regular, resident Soundman at that time, was the Kraft show. He was still going to school, attending engineering classes at UCLA. " went to school in the mornings and to work at NBC around noon every day. I was in my early twenties then. I remember Cal Kuhl was the show's producer. He was a great guy; very nice man. He was very patient with me; he knew I was trying pretty hard to learn.

McKenzie's task was very sensitive. Any mistake he made became part of the airing and they were dreadfully easy to make. Sitting at his console with its array of volume controls, he controlled the broadcast flow. Cutting off each microphone at just the proper moment and cutting in the following one on the instant, KMH progressed from Ken Carpenter's intro to Bing to Trotter and his orchestra to... whatever was ordered. He performed much like a musical conductor, maintaining the level of the sound and timing the entrances and the exits. His precious 'knobs' were as familiar to his well-trained eye and ear as an organist's stops and keyboards.

Several other technicians who worked with him through the years ahead have praised his abilities. "I suppose I was kind of fussy when I was a mixer. I just had to have total silence in the control booth. I'd say, real important: 'Look, if I can't hear it, I can't mix it properly. It seemed to me as if I was painting tonal protraits.

Murdo Mackenzie at the controls of the original NBC mixing panel used for KMH broadcasts.

I was a young guy and I took my work very seriously". Deeply modest today, Murdo relived his memories with a rare and pleasant touch of humour. His contributions to Bing and KMH had much more significance than has generally been accorded him.

Norman Blackburn is another of whom the reporters have too much overlooked in this saga of radio, Bing and KMH. As assistant to the West Coast Vice-President in charge of radio production, Danny Danker, Norm was kept fairly busy picking up on most of the minor details and several of the major ones. While he eventually filled the dynamic Danny's shoes (Danker died in the mid-forties), his best work for KMH involved duties usually un-considered by the public. "One of my jobs was getting all those guest stars, and if you think that was easy, think again. I mean, who did you want to have on the show? Why? How much do they get?" Then, answering his own question, he went on, "You know, when a star was hot, everybody wanted them, but when they were hot they cost plenty. I went out and got them and sometimes it worked both ways: They didn't ask an arm and a leg and Bing and the listeners loved having them on."

Occasionally, Bing would hear of a new singer or actor but who were playing the smaller time than films or radio. "Yeah, like Slim Gaillard. Remember him? Very funny outfit. Did 'Cement Mixer, Putty Putty' and 'Open the Door Richard'. Well Bing tells me, 'Get that guy, if you can, Norm' and so I go downtown late at night to where this cat is doing his turn in some club and I catch him and his musicians as they come towards their dressing rooms. I ask him how he would like to come on the Crosby radio show. They can't believe it. But they were great, just great! These acts had you out late at night sometimes, just to get. Bing was very good about things like this. Always learning what was going on."

Blackburn and Bing played a lot of golf together, usually early in the mornings when the greens were fresh and not yet crowded. Norman had worked with the Disney studios as a cartoonist but his managerial skills must have outweighed his drawing talents somewhat, for it wasn't long before he went to work for the J.Walter Thompson Agency. Sometime after being hired, he discovered among the files that Bing Crosby had recommended him for the job. He laughed loudly, recalling something else Bing had done for him. "He got me to join Lakeside Country Club. We had been playing together quite awhile when he asked me if I was a member, and I told him, 'I can't afford to join a club like Lakeside, Bing'. He just looked at me then said 'You can't afford not to, besides

I'm tired of paying your greenfees.' That was in 1936." Though he has long been retired, he continues at Lakeside. He is editor of the Club's magazine and their historian, having turned out a large and handsome book. His old friend, Bing, naturally has more mentions than anyone else.

"Would you like to hear how I got Joe Frisco?" Why not. "This will make you laugh, and it's a true story. The agency also produced Gene Autrey's Melody Ranch and Joe was on that show sometimes. Well I called Frisco up where he was living at the Plaza Hotel and offered him a spot of Kraft. 'Okay' he says, 'M-M-My fee is $5000'. He always stuttered, in fact he used to make stuttering part of his act. 'Nothing doing, Joe,' I told him I'd give him $500 and he hung up on me. So I called him back and I said to him, 'Joe, don't ever hang up on people, that is very rude, but he said I insulted him by such a small offer. Well, to keep this short, I'll just say that I then called Gene Autry and asked if he wanted to slip Joe a few extra skins, because it would help Melody Ranch if the guy was put on KMH. Gene told me later what happened after Joe had agreed to take a thousand from us and five hundred from him. 'S-S-Say, C-C-Cowboy,' he says, 'I-I-I'll do Bing's show for a yard and a half if you get 5 bills over to me right away, so I can pay my r-r-room rent.'"

While the two major networks, NBS and CBS marketed live entertainment only, they recorded much of their programming for another reason, legal reference. The big fragile glass discs were kept in the files until such needs were no longer required. Aluminium discs, also used, were even worse as far as fidelity was concerned. But fidelity was not an issue to the networks. The term, Protection-records, was not used in this context, but to describe a simultaneously made duplicate while a programme master was being cut for a transcribed b roadcast in later days: A backup copy in case the master was flawed or damaged. Whatever their names, Electrical Transcriptions, Tranks, Platters, Pies, they were never thought of as programmes-for-use by the major networks.

On the West Coast, where the radio action was growing strongest, the Mutual and Don Lee (a subsidiary of CBS until 1937) networks had a constant struggle to co-exist with NBC and CBS. So they went to 'canning' early. Many of their shows were very good dramatically and are remembered today as having contributed to the careers of many performers. Their discs, however, left much to be desired in many instances in the way of technical perfection, still their

Bing and Connie (or Connee depending on which book you read) singing for KMH in the late 1930's.

audience and therefore their market was far smaller, so much was forgiven in their broadcasts. They could never hope to interest any of the big stars who had made their reputations from one coast to the other.

Bing knew about the regional nets, of course, and must have wished for the opportunities that transcribing his radio appearances would have given him. It is not likely that anyone living today knows when he first got the idea into his head to record his show, but as the lesser nets produced more and more of their programming on record he had to finally realize the possibilities were there. Old conventions die hard and slowly. Radio, like the stage and the circus was thought of as living entertainment and could not be conceived of in any other way by the more influential segment of the industry.

As the years went along, Bing became busier and busier. Instead of the long decline of a popular vocalist from the early thirties, he went from strength to strength, seemingly gathering momentum. His increasing popularity offered him many opportunities that the enforced attentions of a weekly radio live series denied him. His growth in public stauture was almost unprecedented. He was becoming as well known as anyone in America, and this at a time in history when it had more heroes than ever before. The air, as well as the newspapers and magazines, was filled with the wartime exploits of servicemen and award-winning generals.Even the Sunday funnies enjoyed a similiar mushroom growth, with most of their interests centred around heroes. All the forms of entertainment, the so-called media, were pressing down and running over with success. Never was there so much before.

There had been drama and heroism in Bing's personal life as well, there always had been and there always would be. In the months before beginning with Kraft, for example, he had lost much of his nerve to speak on the air. It had become a painful, self-conscious effort. "Let them use an announcer for the talking", he insisted, he would just do the singing.This unusual situation came about because his previous sponsors, Woodbury Soap, had leaked it to the trade that his speaking was 'smug', 'insincere' and 'difficult to understand'. As sometimes happens, even yet, this complaint probably came from someone in the company's familywho did not happen to find Bing as irrestistable as the vast majority of his listeners. It seriously affected his attitude. When he joined Kraft that Winter, his reluctance to handle dialogue was apparent. Very apparent.

Recognizing the problem, Carroll wrote comfortable dialogue and thought flow in his scripts that could appeal to Crosby's offhand, almost garrulous manner of speaking and so coaxed him to forget the traumatic experience and learn to relax at the mike. He actually tricked and manipulated Bing until he recovered his aplomb. (Later, Bing worked the same routine on some of his jittery mike-shy guests.)

But he was not merely another hero to his public, he enjoyed a peculiarly more valuable position, one almost of veneration. By now, 1944, he had filmed 'Going My Way' and was thought of by millions as

Father O'Malley, priest and father-confessor. This picture was then at the first pitch of its enormous popularity. He could do no wrong unless he stopped singing SWINGING ON A STAR, THE DAY AFTER FOREVER and (horrors not-to-be-bourne!) TOO-RA-LOO-RA-LOO-RAL. Like Will Rogers' Country Boy before him, Bing's Father O'Malley was totally convincing and totally accepted by almost everybody, even wartime enemies, German and Italy --- or so it was reported. Dial 'O' for O'Malley? Easy, just dial NBC for Bing Crosby and the Kraft Music Hall. Hail KMH!

Hail and farewellbut first it had to stumble and totter before it fell, never to rise again. With all its astonishing success, radio was no different than any other entity in human existance and it began to hurt at its very zenith when Bing Crosby killed his wonderful Kraft Music Hall.

Perhaps it should be said here, early on, that if Crosby comes over as either a hero or a villain to the reader in this, it should be remembered that opinions are consensus in a public account of this kind and may be re-examined in the light of later truth. He was neither saint nor sinner. Actually, he was what his fans had always believed him to be, Just Plain Bing. While, in truth, he was never plain in any way, in his battle to put radio 'in a fruit jar', he behaved as a plain man intent on a simple objective. His efforts were utterly normal, natural and businesslike, given his circumstances and his needs.

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THE DECLINE

Just when exactly did the decline begin? This writer believes, after months of pouring over many reports, studying the broadcasts and the period in which they were aired, then interviewing more than a score of people who were, one way or another, in a position to at least know some of the facts, the decay began in the autumn of 1944, specifically between 15 October and 9 November. This was the time when Bing was due back home from New York and his successful overseas war-tour of England and France, and the day he returned to air with his show.

He had missed being able to arrive in Hollywood in time for the 12 October slot and had to be telephoned in from New York while an old friend, actor George Murphy did his hosting chores for him.

Bing entertains American troops overseas during World War II.

Naturally, this eventuality was planned and rehearsed exactly like any other programme; it was no scratch arrangement, still he might very well have missed even being on this alternative show, something that would never have happened had KMH been transcribed.

In itself, this is not important, he had missed other show dates when commitments had gotten in the way, but this time he also missed the next three Thursdays. He might, it is true, also have had some emergency film-work to do or he might, understandably,have wanted a rest from his travels before jumping back into the bustle of script-reading, rehersal and broadcast. But he may also, quite logically, have been vexed once more by the typical demands of the live broadcast schedule.

At any rate, he surely had much catching up to do. Possibly he was anxious to discuss certain technical things with his soundman. Though Murdo had been in Service since 1942, up in the Mojave with an army unit, working in a groundschool, his six years as chief mixer had established a routine that continued to be used. "I was replaced by a guy named Reid," said MacKenzie. "He did the show while I was gone." Bing knew the reference-discs were now better than ever they had been before because of the new compounds, acetate and vinylite, which did away with the terrible glass platters. Turntables and other components had also been refined. Now the AFRS was busily turning out hundreds of them for their shortwave and service installations. And nobody was complaining. The fighting personnel loved them. Stars by the hundreds were happily giving their time and talent to 'lighten the load' for the service- people.

If the AFRS stuff was good enough for the men and women who were risking their lives for their country, why was it not good enough for their country too? It seemed like a logical observation during a time when everyone was making do or doing without for the duration'.

Could his programme be recorded in such a way that the edits could not be heard? Would the new record materials permit a more realistic-sounding broadcast? Could they not work thdse problems out enough to satisfy NBC or even CBS? After all, the regionals were using transcriptions more and more. As for the important performers, many more had begun radio work for them. Who could forget the stunning success that Orson Welles had made of his 'The Shadow' series over at Mutual, and that was back in 1939!

(Bing listens to a transcribed broadcast)

But NBC was still death on transcriptions and CBS agreed one hundred percent. More than that, NBC continued, even, to refuse the use of recorded sound effects. And in all fairness, it should be said the discs, whatever their improvements, still sounded somewhat tinny and dull or, worse, muffled, by comparison with the live variety. Perhaps, however, the networks fears that the listening public would turn off their sets, was the real reason behind their 'stubborness'.

Crosby may very well have felt that persuing his endeavour was as futile as ever, but the construction of his show belies this. An analysis of that first broadcast after his return from Europe indicates he was making a greater effort than ever. On that show (November 9, 1944) there were a number of unexpected changes. A new girlsinger, Eugenie Baird, took over from Marilyn Maxwell, and after more than

three years, the Music Maids gave way to the Kraft Choir (sometimes the Kraft Club) as vocal backup for Bing. There was a new order of gueststars. From then on til the end, they would have to sing for their supper or play an instrument. Not until the very last weeks when events were changing rapidly and uncertainty had become commonplace, were a few comedians allowed back inside the doors.

Leo 'Ukie' Sherin was still warm-up and he was still one of the fixtures ("Hey Bing! I'm back!), but he glowed only as an adjunct, he was never allowed to glitter. Gone was the dramatic actor; the big-name performer, the character actor; the Serviceman guest, the poet, the politician, the sports-figure. Even the studio-audience, while not entirely dispensed with, was restricted to the opening and closing applause-cues and whatever titters they could not quite suppress. Most of all, the atmosphere, the ambience; that otherwise indefinable element, had been altered to a controlled, restrained calm. All the programme's parts that tended towards strong laughter and sharp changes in tone were either eliminated or held tighly within definite spots in the new thirty minutes. Overlapping sounds: applause, laughter, musical bridges were now missing. Bing and Baird's vocals were often of the softer type. Ken Carpenter did his commercials in more crisp delivery with little or no extraneous chatter mixed with them. A great proportion of the last section was given over to the new feature, the medleys, wherein Bing reprised three or four of the tunes, generally from his pictures. These spots used connecting bits of dialogue by Bing alone or sometimes with Carpenter. The listener gets the uneasy feeling that everybody else has gone home until 'Carp' returns for the quick sign-off.

The key thing to recognize here is that the broadcast had become segmented and the segments strung together. It all sounded prepared for recording.

On the second new programme, the following week, the broadcast loop tie-in was again used. The guest, Frank Sinatra, was brought in from Buffalo. In his brief exchange with Bing, just before he does a vocal of THESE FOOLISH THINGS, Sinatra says, "I heard that you have a new kind of show. More music, more singing, and that you're plenty happy about the whole thing". The audience-sounds are Frank's in Buffalo. When he does his number and says goodbye, the quiet on the programme is almost palpable and so are the quick silences between the other bits of business. No danger of overlap which would make splicing impossible.

Does all this mean that Crosby was using transcriptions on the air? Certainly not. Does it mean that in his efforts to re-vamp his show, he was being cruel and ruthless and uncaring? He was none of these things. Bing was simply striving to adjust the presentation so that it might pave the way for recording. If that moment came the next week or the next year, his series would have everything in place; no wrenching changes as there would be with a show still playing like a vaudeville house. KMH would have gained the experience and the listeners would have come to accept the change.

Unfortunately, the set-up was not very good, really. Anyone may detect the awkward meshing of the gears, if one takes the trouble to give a careful listen to the reference-discs. The playing quality, while good, is nowhere equal to live standards - not even today when high-fidelity, sound-on-sound and stereo can greatly improve them. Disc-transcriptions never did and never could have made canned-soup programmes work very well. The wheels would always creak, the bones would always clack if you listened for them. The major nets were immovably convinced that the audience 'out there' would detect them. For good or ill, depending on your personal point of view, Crosby refused to believe the issue was all-important.

As for the level of enjoyment, KMH betrayed no diminution whatever. It was still, as always, a very good show; no doubt about it. The old discs make that clearer than they do the playback quality, which nothing but tape could ever do, and tape was still years away. Great pop music persisted and Bing sang more then ever. Eugenie Baird actually could, if you let her, rock you to sleep with her throaty renditions. DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE FROM ME, I DREAM OF YOU, SWEET DREAMS SWEETHEART were only three of her tranquilizers.

Important guests made every airing a received experience, now that they too, were working harder. There was the surprising Beatrice Kay with her English music hall shout of STEAMBOAT BILL and Fred Lowry whistling up a HOLIDAY FOR STRINGS, while Johnny Mercer, long since a part of the Hollywood showbiz community, sneaked off with the first show of the new year (January 4, 1945). Spike Jones, now a famous 'old boy' around the joint, could and often did, wake the old Hall into an upright position. Alive or any other way, KMH was still a first rate affair.

The year of 1944 had been one of Bing's busiest. During that twelve-month he made three feature pictures and a propaganda short for the

War Activities Committee, besides performing briefly in two other features and lending his voice only for a tour de force which turned out to be a boost for the comedian Eddie Bracken as well as a charming pastiche for audiences. Bing also produced more than sixty released Decca records and continued, along with others, to do short-wave work at the AFRS studio (where Ken Carpenter had become their most important announcer). Also, he worked on other people's programmes as guest. His trip to Europe had consumed several weeks. All things considered, he worked rather hard for a person considered to be the laziest man in Hollywood.

Golf, then as always, continued to give him the quick fix he needed. The beautiful calming greensward and the open vistas granted him escape and time to re-charge his batteries. At forty-one he was still at the crest of his powers and energy but how long would that continue at such a pace?

It is doubtful that anyone wanted or needed transcribed radio more than the busy performer, yet Bing was one of the very few agitating for it. However, as the months rolled on, he must have begun to wonder if it would ever happen. No one that mattered took him seriously; not just the networks but his sponsor and the series' producer, the Thompson Company. Of course, his new set up was his to use if he wanted it, because his popularity was so very strong; but if KMH was to go on at all, it would go on live. To record or not to record was not the Question to anyone but Bing Crosby.

The winter went away, not that you would ever notice it had been around in Los Angeles, spring arrived and with it the beginning of World War II's long, bitter end. Crosby still refused to give up and the opposition still refused to give in. By now, his wishes were an open secret around town and the gallery of watchers had begun. Slowly, gathering speed, the Question would roll towards its answer.

He continued with his new arrangement, opening each show with a solo, now an established way of his broadcast career, and closed it with medleys. Everything was, as they said then, copacetic, and indeed the very air made it seem that few things were okay or soon would be. But the KMH star, for one of the few times in his remarkable life, discovered his unyielding will implacably stalled. Here was one of the top radio series, achingly available for recording and selling to the East Coast, to the West, to the Dixie network, to anywhere, everywhere. Give it a listen, then buy it. It became a milestone for Kraft, for J. Walter, for NBC. Take it and the rest of radio will follow like sheep to the comb.

(Bing and comedienne Cass Daily on mid-40's KMH)

Thanks, but, no thanks...

The preceding paragraphs are pure speculation based, as said, upon many sources, including newspapers, magazines and trade journals of the period and from a few gusrded remarks of several individuals who worked with Bing but do not want themselves quoted. The reasons for the difficulty in collecting hard information on the subject is because of the lingering resent,ents and perhaps even legal concerns still alive after nerly forty years. Hypotheses, of course, are always

weakly tenable as good history but the next developments are easily verified because some of them entered into the State court records.

So it is late spring and in just a few weeks, Murdo will be mustered out of service and return immediately to the KMH company. What he might do in overcoming the several bugs still lurking in recording must seem exhilarating to all concerned, but there is something even more exhilarating taking place. At this point in our narrative, dates are very important for they will enable us to get a clearer picture.

1936: NBC, too swollen with success to fit the available Prime Time hours of each day, was magically changed by its corporate owner, RCA, into a new version of the Siamese Twins. Like newborns everywhere, they were given names, the Red Network and the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company.

1941: But, since this alarmed the competition, the Federal Communications Bureau, in its ponderous and slow yet cautious way, finally got round to making its dreaded anti-trust rumblings, a warning NBC, at lastbut most reluctantly began to take notice of. She, therefore, decided upon another magic act of procreation and, like the wily amoeba which requires no outside help, literally bifurcated. By December she had "effected the separation". Mark Woods was appointed head of the "Blue", while Mr Trammel remained as president of the "Red".

1943: The FCC, imitating Queen Victoria on another occasion, was not amused and the slow rumblings grew louder. Finally, to escape the problem, NBC sold the lesser Blue to Life Savers, 'The Candy With The Hole', for a breathtaking (by 1943 standards) eight million dollars. Life Savers, playing adoptive parents to the hilt, rechristened their struggling babe American Broadcasting Company, thereby pleasing the warmtime propagandists and stilling the horrible FCC stomach noises. Re-adjustments went on through the year and into the next, but little Blue was now on its way into a wonderously healthy and happy future.

1945: By the middle of this final war year, Mr Woods was again persuaded to accept the job of wet-nurse and "resumed active direction as its President". It became his principal duty to see to it that the new national network made its way into the hard, cruel world of 'coast-to-coast' transmission, a world dominated by its own mother.

Question: Did Bing Crosby hope for or did he already have the attention of Mark Woods and ABC? Is this question the answer to The Question?

Either way, yes or no, at just about the same time (May 17, 1945), the host of NBC's Kraft Music Hall entered his Studio B, ambled up to his RCA 44-BX microphone to await his cue. He was as calm and as affable as ever. Just on six, he opened his programme with a bit of his familiar theme song then shortly segued into his first number, CANDY. He greeted his guest, the opera diva Florence Alba and, down the show, delivered a pitch for the Seventh War Bond Drive. He sang seven numbers in all, more than ususal. The last, I REMEMBER YOU, had no hidden meaning, but when he left the studio that evening and did not come back for a month and a half, millions remembered him and wondered what happened.

Another movie? (There was - the Father O'Malley sequel.) More gramophone records? (None this month but he would still make more of them than he had the year before.) An early vacation? (Some of the papers said so.) Illness? (Fit as a fiddle but his wife, Dixie, had been hospitalized with pneumonia earlier in the year and may still have been a little shaky.)

What actually happened was that Bing had invoked an ancient law available to all of us. He quit. He 'took a walk', always the one powerful weapon against The System. The 'Court Of Last Resort' should never be convened lightly by any sensible person and Bing knew it. He had done it before, again after serious consideration. In 1931, he refused to continue singing at the Cocoanut Grove unless he was paid the kind of money he believed was commensurate with his sudden popularity, which had begun to fill every table night after night. Now he did it again. Had he grown tired of coaxing radio to change its ways or did he have an alternative plan up his sleeve?

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THE FALL

Someone in print called it not just an early vacation but an unscheduled one. "We all thought that it was an unprofessional thing that he did", an announcer at NBC thought at the time. "But we figured he'd be back; He had to come back because you couldn't do that in radio and brag about it. Nobody was that big." No information has been located that Bing bragged about it. As a matter of fact, he was the quietest of anyone. If he publicly spoke of his determination to transcribe, how could he possibly return if he failed?

However, the corporate feathers hit the corporate fan with such violence that even Bing must have noticed. There were sudden emergency conferences, huddles, luncheons, telephone calls, Western Union telegrams. Bing was out of the picture. Maybe he headed for Lakeside. "He went out to good old Lakeside sometimes when he had a problem," Norm Blackburn told me. He spoke seriously of his distant memories and his beloved Lakeside. "It's a helluva place to forget problems. Of course, you didn't walk up to him and say, 'What's the matter Bing old buddy', you know."

Along with Carroll Carroll, Lina Romay, Blackburn joined the writer and others for a long fascinating luncheon at the old golf club. From the attractive and comfortable clubhouse dining room, large surrounding windows gave us a wide view of scores of golfers passing into or out of the building against a beautiful scene of lawns and trees. "No, Bing was a busy guy," Norm continued, "he would come here when he wanted to sort things out, maybe, but he also came out to play a little golf also, you know. Anyway, he had his people who were supposed to take care of problems." Did Bing think his brother, Everett of his lawyers could handle things without him this time? Carroll smiled at me. "Obviously not, he walked, didn't he?"

Blackburn recalled a touching moment with Bing at the time. "Look, Bing," he had said, "I'm in the middle of all this. What am I supposed to do; which way do I jump?" "Don't worry about it, Norm," Crosby reassured him, it will work out."

It is natural for feelings to polarize under such stress. Suddenly one has to make serious decisions and commitments; opinions must be expressed. Either one goes with the money or goes without it. Both Blackburn and Carroll worked for the Thompson agency. Sides had to be taken. The J. Walter Thompson agency was one of the most important producers of network radio programming, Kraft one of the most important sponsors and NBC the biggest network. If Bing lost the argument, where would his co-workers go who did not happen to be movie stars?

"I argued with them," Norm said. "Jack Platt, John Reber and I told Bing what they said, hoping - I guess - it would help him make up his mind to stay: 'If we want to hear Crosby sing on records, we can go out, like everybody else, and buy them. We don't have to hire him to make them for us.' That's what they said."

(Is Bing trying to block out the sounds of Bob Burns' bazooka or the arguments of the network executives?)

Carroll was asked whether he would have done the same thing, had he been in Bing's shoes. "If I had been in his place? I might have, but I was not in his place. I was in my own. I had my own point of view."

Both men paid a price for what happened. Not directly nor at the time, nor even, ironically, because of their particular opinions, but had the celebrated Question never come up, they very likely would have remained where they were, indefinitely. Blackburn, after rising to a vice-presidency, left to work for NBC in New York while Carroll, after a brief time, left Thompson to work for others.

Carroll, a radio writer since 1919 never forsook his attitude about the transcription. "Distilling radio," he said, "made it dull; movies without the screen dark. Don't be quick to knock that pressure on the performers driving a live show. That pressure kept them hyped up, on their toes, and the listeners sensed it. It increased their enjoyment." Again he stared at me. "How would you have liked it if I had turned up today with all my answers neatly read onto one of those little cassettes? Being cut and dried is OK for Christmas cookies but, believe me, it's lousy for performance."

His response was rational and valid, and none of us knew how to argue the point, but here on this page, safely away from Carroll, it can be said that other professionals during the time said such things as 'Polishing and honing makes most things brighter...The horror of the fluff and the blowup should be acceptable only when it is unavoidable... etc.' I did find the courage to ask this lively-minded man if he did not realize that had our ancestors been able to transfer the Elizabethan Stage and the medicine-show to records, they surely would have? But he silenced me with, "Then they would have been producing television and not live radio."

Lina Romay barely got a word in edgewise and what she had to say will be discussed in another place but her attractive presence at the meeting softened the impact of memories too painfully recalled.

Bing Crosby was, by any standard, the most popular star who ever entered the Hall. If he had not worked on the programme, despite its several innovations, fine writing and other qualities, it would be almost totally forgotten today. When he checked in, it immediately became on of the three or four most important shows on air time. When he departed, it faded like a rose in the rain. Carroll readily admits it was the high point in his immensely successful career. It was almost singular as a vocal-host variety show, having but one sponsor during its entire run of ten and a half years.

Kraft, by their anger and their efforts to keep Bing to his contract, demonstrated their belief in the series, but when the Thursday nights rolled by, one after another, with no Bing and no settlement with Crosby enterprises, they threatened to sue. They pointed out they had a relatively fresh option-agreement, one that Norm had travelled to Elko, Nevada to have Bing sign, only a few months before. This contract had four more years to run to expiration, but Crosby's office pointed out that such personal contracts had a seven year limitation on them in California.

The wrangling went on. Even J. Walter Thomson brought in their own council, Sigrid Peterson - still busily working at similiar tasks in Los Angeles - to try and patch things up. But Crosby and his corporation insisted that they wanted out and fueled the flames by stating that money was also a part of the breakdown, if not the whole reason behind it. Kraft, they said, had offered no new incentives to their star who was now number one at the box office and thus had much greater drawing power. They argued that if Kraft sales could rise, why not the salary of the star who helped them to make the rise? If KMH had been evolved into a broadcast-vehicle built around Bing Crosby, why should they not pay him more than the average host receives for the average radio series?

Then abruptly, Bing returned to the programme six weeks after his departure. Now it was late June and his being on hand to sign the show off until the fall would reduce the unwanted attentions everyone was receiving. This outing (June 28) also had Florence Alba as guest. Interestingly, there are several not-so-subtle references to Crosby's long absence, among them, his explanation that he had been on a golfing exhibition with Bob Hope, to military hospitals. Ken Carpenter also tells everyone Bing had also been on a number of bond rallies, hospital shoews and 'free-style autographing'. As if these were not enough, and to create humour in a touchy situation, Bing says that he had also been up at his ranch at Elko, nursing a sick cow and suffering, himself, from a stomach upset. Newspaper accounts at the time verify almost all these excuses, including his stomach complaint!

When he introduces Miss Alba, he coyly asks if she is now a regular on he show, since she was his guest on his last broadcast, to which she responds with, "Well, as regular as you are". The audience roars. With our hindsight, these reactions seem very obvious. Bing announces at the end the list of next weeks guests, including Perry Como, thus admitting, by ommission, that he would not be back.

Considering the reality behind the very sick broadcast, it is a credit to Bing that he permitted Carroll's pen such free reign. (Carroll might say that Bing didn't care.)

Bing left immediately for New York, possibly for more consultations with Kraft and Thompson. However, nothing they offered him would induce him to return. Kraft then tendered him a rare offer for that period, corporate shares in their company. At first blush this seems like a generous overture indeed, but this could hardly match what he was certain

to earn by getting another sponsor, one, moreover which would permit him to produce and record his own show. Additionally, why should he accept shares in a business enterprise - even as large as Kraft - and thereby restrict his potential in his own field?

Finally, Kraft put Bing 'on the carpet' (still a circulating term in those days), but since a long, bitter publicized trial would have been harmful to both sides, an out-of-court settlement was soon reached. By now it was well into the new year and the company agreed to release the actor from his contract if he would return and do another thirteen weeks. (Contracts are still sometimes written in increments of thirteen or twenty-six or thirty-nine weekly appearances.) This would give them time to put together another show with someone else and it would carry them all into the late spring where a 'summer replacement' would reduce further unwanted attention.

Since we all move from simplicity to complexity in our affairs in life, we are fortunate if we can feed on our successes and not on our failures. Who can blame Bing for what he made happen, knowing this? For him to have done otherwise would likely have had little impact on the preservation of live radio and Bing, failing to protect his interests, would in all probability,have watched someone else succeed in his place. It is not even unreasonable to suppose that someone else might have seized the initiative that seemed at hand to a sizable proportion of the professional radio community. Would a Frank Sinatra or a Perry Como and their 'people', already hard on Crosby's heels, have resisted such an obvious opportunity had they been offered it? There are tides in the affairs of men that when taken at the flood lead on to victory, so said the poet. I think we must agree.

It is, by this time, 1946, the eve of the future, with the war now over, even if the cold war is not. Norm will begin putting together the new KMH which will star the re-established Al Jolson and featuring Oscar Levant as Second Banana. Lou Bring will supply the orchestra. There will be a new, unknown girlsinger, flown out from the East. She had been tried out and hired by Mr Reber only weeks before. Ken Carpenter remains as programme announcer. The layout or format is to be changed only to accomodate the new personalities.

Lina, who had worked on the old show for many weeks during the previous year but who appeared on just one show with Bing, left with the others for Philco. The exodus to ABC also included the charioteers, Ukie, John Scott and his 'tantalizing twenty-six' and Murdo.

The magic of 'transcription' placed Carp on both programmes. MacKenzie's talent for hearing the proper sound levels and his management of details would get him elevated from lowly Mixer to Co-producer. He was asked how such a surprising thing like that could happen and he answered, "Well, I knew the whole thing was breaking up and I asked Bing if I could go along with him, that's all." Hardly all. Bing had long before discovered MacKenzie and his passion for getting everything right. His enthusiasm for those days and his love of Bing easily explains his promotion. Of all the hundreds of Crosby broadcasts that were going to follow, his name would be a part of the sign-off: "This programme was produced and directed by Bill Morrow and Murdo MacKenzie."

The last weeks would be a breeze. February 7, they all joined hands and began. This time, the flavour of the presentation was slightly different, perhaps because it even reverted a little to its old arrangement, but there was nothing like the startling changes of the November 9, 1944 outing, when Bing began his campaign. Those in the business will tell you that changes refresh weary formats and keep successful shows operating. Now until the end and beyond, a fine pianist ('Hi-tone Box Man') would be prominently featured. Actually, solo pianists had been used on those two 'trouble shows', where Florence Alba had guested. Eddie Duchan would be on nearly all the remaining shows and in fact would take over from Bing for the summer, to steer the old movering ark down to the time where 'Electric Al' would come aboard.

The actor, Frank Morgan, the very Wizard of Oz in person, had served at the host's mike during the past weeks and joined Bing now as guest - comic in the second position. His hesitating delivery larded with just a seasoning of silliness would nicely balance against the urbane Duchin. Bing would continue dominating the whole display with his vocal-work and his warm delivery.

As before, references were written into the script of Crosby's absence, to the delight of the studio audience. Ken says at the top of the show, "And now back from a well-earned vacation...Bing AWOL Crosby!" Bing interrupts with, "AWOL? What's that AWOL routine?" About the middle, Eddie Duchin asks, "Bing, I've been wondering, what ever made you come back to work?" Crosby (very straight), "They shut off my cheese, Ed." There had been no well kept secret, his fans were keeping up with him, but few knew he was to leave KMH forever.

Lina's one appearance with Bing was in March but she was assigned to a non-Latin number, much to her surprise, a song from a recently released Crosby-Hope picture: PERSONALITY. It is apparent that she was wanted as a regular and that her image as a 'Latin Tamale' would have to undergo some changes. She did have an agile singing voice with a very high appeal quality but she was heavily identified with the Xavier Cugat type of music. That would have to change if she was to last on a Crosby series. Other girls guested now: Martha Tilton, Georgia Gibbs and Peggy Lee on her first playing date with the singer. Marilyn Maxwell and Murdo's wife, Jinny (Trudy Erwin, remember) stopped in for final calls, almost as though they were once more on audition, but their familiar voices also made it seems as if the old Hall was experiencing deja vu. Perhaps sentiment did have something to do with these farewells.

Norm's efforts to obtain Joe Frisco worked, of course, and the oldtime "one-in-two" vaudevillian did very well, even if he did not cadge all the skins (dollars) he may have tried to get. And Hope, somehow, often in at the beginnings and the ends of many of Crosby's performances, appeared on this same show.

The last airing (May 9) was a surprisingly subdued, if not to say mild, offering. No fanfares, no frills, no balloons going up, no bells. After all those hundreds of others, the listener might have expected something more appropriate than (Ken): "Well, Bing, this is getaway night on the old Kraft Music Hall." (Bing): That's what it is, Ken." A bit later, Duchin tells Bing, "I want to wish you a happy vacation and - no kidding - thanks for everything." At the moment before the close, Bing speaks directly to his audience. "I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your tolerance and loyalty for this show." This time, the applause runs on and on, then under Ken's sign-off, Trotter's orchestra carries all of it into yesterday with a few bars of the swing arrangement of HAIL KMH!

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Theatrically, it was anti-climax: 'Tune in again'...'Don't go away, we'll be right back'...'See ya later, Alligator...' On the surface, it ended as did T.S. Eliot's Waste Land, "not with a bang but with a whimper", but historically, it was a true ending; a death, because it was never to be heard again - except as repeats on the reference-discs. The package with which the Thompson Company replaced it, folded after a few seasons, unfortunately, for Al Jolson and several others.

Bing's new series told the listeners that they had been right all along, that it was Bing who made his show, who had made KMH a long time success. But on the new show, even with Bing very much present, there were several subtle differences. If it did not very much imitate the dead KMH, it seemed to wish it could, the jokes all sounded a trifle forced or maybe only a little quicker. The whole production to a pining KMH lover sounded rather slick; the simpler qualities were now gone; That warmth between voices, the cohesion of the material and the 'weather' the old programme projected felt absent.

"Don't be quick to knock that pressure of the live show," Carroll had said. Was that it? Was that the answer? Or had we expected impossible resurrection?

Years later, when the networks were scrambling to catch up with their upstart competitor, Bob Burns paid a guest's visit to the Philco show. By this time, he too was involved with transcription or would be, but it mattered little to him because he would soon retire and enjoy the few years left to him. On the broadcast, it is not many minutes before he and Bing are reminiscing, then Carp and John Scott join them, with Murdo supervising from the control booth.

(Burns): "Well, Bing, how's things on the old Kraft Music Hall?"
(Bing): "We're not on for Kraft Cheese anymore, we're on for Philco."
(Burns): "You know, you and I have left the old KMH but Ken's still with 'em. Ken how can you be loyal to both sponsors?"
Carp uses a stage joke to explain.
(Bing): "You must feel right at home, back with the old gang."
(Burns): "Boy, this sure is some reunion, being with you fellas. It's like old times."

But it wasn't really. It would never, never be like old times again.

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But what happened afterwards? When Bing and his fellow-workers put on their coats and left the Hall, where did they go and what did they do? They made history by re-making radio! They were the first who went national on transcriptions. But they did not do it alone.

What mysterious stranger appeared and what was that thing he called a (Magnetophone) he had with him? Who replaced Carroll Carroll and Norman Blackburn?

TUNE IN, SAME TIME, NEXT ISSUE AND FIND OUT IN: "TRANSCRIBING BING".

Green Guide
Thursday 23 January 1986

Airwaves trapped for posterity

You cannot understand the 20th century without looking at TV and radio . . . I think what we are doing is sort of the prototype of what's going to happen around the rest of the world.

Robert Batscha, president of the Museum of Broadcasting, 18 November 1985

We are impressed with the importance of this medium: we shall hope to learn to use it and not abuse it.

Ed Murrow, news analyst/host of 'See It Now' (premiere), 18 November 1951

By HELEN THOMAS in New York

THIRTY-FOUR years and a million repeats separate these men but the essence of spirit they share is the cornerstone of the work going on at New York's staggering and stimulating Museum of Broadcasting.

A non-profit institution which "collects, preserves, interprets and exhibits radio and television programs", it boasts 25,000 items that span more than 60 years of broadcast history.

And it really is a place where time and space warp, events repeat and childhood memory seems to guide most adult fingering through the dog-eared, computer-catalogued cards chockablock with pop tube milestones. The earliest episodes of **I Love Lucy, Shindig, Bonanza, The Honeymooners, Streets of San Francisco** (its original teleplay based on Carolyn Weston's book **Poor Poor Ophelia**), **Name That Tune, Have Gun Will Travel, CBS Playhouse, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, The Addams Family, Columbo,** Judy Garland on **Hollywood Palace,** Elvis and The Beatles on **The Ed Sullivan Show** . . .

Years and inhibitions fall away in the museum's library as this stockpile of small-screen hits is discovered. And then there are the rare, irreplaceable gems of both mediums — a 1920 broadcast by Franklin D. Roosevelt, the first piece in the radio collection; an eye-witness account of the Hindenberg disaster; Ed Murrow's renowned **This Is . . . London World War II** reports; highlights of the McCarthy hearings.

The oldest piece in the TV archives went to air 46 years ago, a segment of NBC's 1939 drama **The Streets of New York.** There also is the 1944 broadcast of Verdi's **Hymn Of The Nations,** with Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra.

"It's astonishing to think that before the museum was established, the only way you could study or follow TV shows was by reading about them in newspapers," says Dr Robert Batscha, the institution's second president.

"Having the programs and helping people understand television better as a creative force is what I see we're doing first. Now we have the primary sources, we can begin to look constructively, critically and selectively at this medium."

William S. Paley — CBS doyen and the Museum of Broadcasting's chairman — certainly believed such an idea would catch on. He put up the "seed money" to kick things off in 1976. Now, 100,000 people a year — from buffs to inquisitive tourists and **Hill Street Blues's** Daniel J. Travanti (boning-up for an upcoming role as the ubiquitous journalist Edward J. Murrow) — make the most of what has been gathered, through Paley's inspiration.

The museum resides in Manhattan's yuppy-ish midtown region, between two major bookstores at the top of East 53rd Street, housed in one of this city's least imposing buildings.

It is quite a distance from the busy US Armed Forces recruitment office in Times Square and the resilient, shelterless bodies that huddle under cardboard slabs and newspaper along footpaths,

night and day, closer to the East Village.

Nevertheless, the archives keeps 40 people employed and finds its finance through 80 "contributors", extremely monied corporations, foundations and individuals. It also culls what is arguably the best and worst of the TV and radio industries, every 12 months.

"They are very generous — although not as generous as we'd like, of course," says the president. Even so, each network allows the museum up to 300 hours of material a year. Not surprisingly, the third-floor library is consistently flooded with updates: at this point, in fact, a selection of 175,000 disc recordings — all of NBC's Radio Network programming from 1927 to 1969 — are being transferred to audiotape.

The institution also runs eight major exhibitions a year. These recently included seminars by Leonard Bernstein, Lucille Ball and Jack Parr and 'Dimensions Of Imagination', a festival which covered 60 hours of programming in a salute to **Twilight Zone's** creator, Rod Serling. An extraordinarily detailed **Jazz On Television** series is now screening (until next month) as well as a shorter expo of classic TV commercials.

"About 20 years ago, going to the movies was really just perceived as pop culture. Slowly, we began to look seriously at 'film' . . . now people know who wrote and directed movies, in some instances even who the cinematographer was," says Dr Batscha.

"There's no question any more about film as an art form. I think that's what we're trying to do with radio and TV. There is such history there — 60 years of radio, 30 years of television."

Foreign work is not ignored entirely, despite his confession that this collection is "basically American". British, German and Irish festivals have been held and an Italian one is now in the works. Dr Batscha also says positive things about Australian programs and "our good public archives in Canberra".

But while he is clearly trying to amass an extensive, democratic selection of what has been on the international airwaves, some things are even out of his museum's reach. And control.

Gone, apparently forever, is episode 35 of (Sid) **Caesar's Hour**, a 1955 series otherwise intact; the first Super Bowl, recorded by two networks in 1967 but subsequently erased; the original production of **Amahl and the Night Visitors**, Gian Carlo Menotti's opera from 1951.

One or two glaring omissions also can be found in the collection, by discerning eyes. No trace of the irrascible **Mr Ed** exists in these archives (much to the staff's consternation) and Norman Lear's classic sitcom **Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman** also is conspicuous by its absence. But what is accessible in this broadcast hall-of-fame could keep all real tube and wireless junkies occupied for years.

In hippy, zippy color, circa 1968, is the cooler-than-now **Mod Squad**, that largely-forgotten fore-runner to today's cops-in-threads saga, **Miama Vice**. "We don't fink on kids," Pete earnestly tells the captain in the series' pilot, little knowing what lay ahead. A bit later Linc, momentarily without shades, marvels, "Man, what a pad" and Julie sighs "groovy" somewhere in between.

It's a lot of the stuff we've all been growing up with, from a new perspective and different frame of reference — a collection of stories, information, sounds and communication styles that stretch across the century.

"It's an exciting job," says Dr Batscha. "Kids come in wanting to see the television coverage of the Kennedy assassination, which we figure they've heard about from their parents. A lot of older people come in and see programs they remember from original broadcasts, decades ago.

"I think I'll always get a kick when I realise the diversity of material people come to us to see and hear".

No doubt the Museum of Broadcasting's influence will spread. Others like it will spring up in other cities. In the interim, it's another solid excuse to come to New York.

THE CRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY - Vol 5 (1928) - Jonzo JZ 5

John McNicolas now having overcome his production problems, further issues in this admirable series have now begun arriving. Volume 5 takes us from April 22nd to May 22, 1928 and covers the end of Bing's Whiteman Victor period and the start of the Columbia era. From "Dancing Shadows" to "Get Out and Get Under the Moon". Quality of course, is excellent.

On page 55, we list a number of records shops around Australia reported to be stocking these LP's, but this society has obtained 20 copies at the

special price of $12.00 if purchased at our meetings or $16 if sent by mail. Sorry about the extra, but that's what it costs us! We still have a few copies of Volume 4 left, however Vols 1,2 and 3 are all gone.

TRUE LOVE - Music Society Label - CD 198519

Another compact disc featuring Bing, but alas, only on one track. The song is, of course, Bing's duet with Grace Kelly of the title number. Produced in England, the CD contains 18 tracks ranging from the early 50's (Dean Martin & Helen O'Connell on "How Do You Like Your Eggs in the Morning) through to quite recent times. Other artists (all featured in duets) include Brigette Bardot & Sacha Distel, Elton John & France Gall, Dolly Parton & Willie Nelson, Anne Murray and Glen Campbell and Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. A mixed bag!

MEMORIES - MCA Records (604.7116) Brazil

Our Brazilian member, Joaõ Daudt D'Oliveira Neto, supplied us with all the details of this interesting new release a few weeks back. The LP features twelve tracks in all - four each by Bing, Louis Armstrong and Earl Grant. The four Crosby tracks are of most interest to us of course, especially as all are quite hard to obtain in any form these days. The titles are: DOMINO, GETTING TO KNOW YOU, I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE and INDIAN SUMMER. The second-named is

particularly difficult to come by. as most collectors will know. For the record (no pun intended), the Armstrong tracks are HELLO DOLLY, WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHIN' IN, WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD and MOON RIVER, while Earl Grant is represented by THE END (AT THE RAINBOW), JAMACIA FAREWELL, EBB TIDE and LOVE LETTERS. The whole disc is quite a pleasant listening experience.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT JOAÕ IS ABLE AND WILLING TO SUPPLY COPIES TO PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

Joaõ writes: "Right now (November 20, 1985) the price including air mail postage is US$16.00, but this will change by the time you print your newsletter. Although I will sell copies, I'd really rather trade than sell."

So that's your cue. I'd suggest that you write to Joaõ before you do anything, even if it's just to check out the latest mailing cost. And if you have anything for exchange, be sure to include details. Don't forget tc include a couple of International Reply Coupons from your post office to help Joaõ with return postage.

The address: Joaõ Daudt D'Oliveira Neto
Rua General Urquiza 119. Apt 207
Leblon 22431
Rio De Janeiro
BRAZIL

Joaõ also writes that he has for exchange a copy of the LP:
BING'S HOLLYWOOD - SWINGING ON A STAR

****

BING CROSBY DELUXE - MCA P-11540 Japan

Nothing to get too excited about here: Blue of the night, I surrender dear, Sweet Lelani, Tea for two, Swinging on a star, Too-ra-loo-ra, Begin the beguine, You belong to my heart, Dear hearts and gentle people, Play a simple melody, Some enchanted evening, La vie en rose, Autumn leaves, Around the world, Swanee and Now is the hour.

HIGH TOR - Decca DL 8272 USA or SPAIN

This LP will be welcomed by collectors as it has never been reissued since appearing in the mid-1950's! It features the songs from the soundtrack of Bing's TV movie of the same title and also stars a very young Julie Andrews. Unfortunately, this disc, which we understand is pressed in Spain is not available here. Try the USA or UK.

"THE VOICE THAT LAUNCHED A BILLION DREAMS

UNFORGETTABLE **BING**

KING OF THE CROONERS" (Sheldon O'Connell)

3rd of MAY, 1903 TACOMA. *14th OCTOBER, 1977 MADRID.*

The International Crosby Circle. Crosby Chronicles. The New Bing Crosby Colour Photoclub. The Bing Crosby Historical Society (Tacoma). The Victorian Bing Crosby Society (Australia).

Mr. Leslie Crowther and some of the nicest, most warm hearted people in the world - Crosby fans, from all over. Still enjoying the best there is.

LETTER BOX

From Jim Parratt, Warburton, Victoria

May I take this opportunity to wish you and the members the very best wishes for the Festive Season. A season that makes us Crosby fans think with affection of the tremendous contribution that Bing made to this very special time of year. Bing Crosby has been a part of Christmas to so many people in so many parts of the world for so many years that it is hard to realise that it is over eight years since his passing. The Victorian Bing Crosby Society is doing a wonderful job in keeping Bing's memory alive and the efforts of you and your committee are greatly appreciated. I hope that the society continues and prospers for many years to come.

From Shirley Naylor, Orange, NSW

It was nice to see my friend Richard Pearson in front of the Bing Crosby Stadium and I was interested to hear his comments regarding Bing's visit to the Skyline Caverns. Bing was there in 1950 for the world premiere of Riding High and also the dedication of the stadium. I've just had a rummage through my Crosby memorabilia and found the Northern Virginia Daily - Crosby Souvenir Edition. It has a picture of sign of welcome, advertising the Skyline Caverns, and is dated Saturday April 1st, 1950. I also have a large red and white badge to commemorate the day, sent to me by my friend Jeanelle James.

From Francis Smith, New York, USA

(Frank supplied the article on Bing and Christmas which appears on page 51 of this issue. Frank also supplied us with a copy of the letter he wrote to the author of the article, Ray Kerrison:)

Your beautiful column on Bing that appeared on December 27 made 1985 and 1986 a bright year for all Crosby fans. I was a friend of Bing's since 1940 and a a former President of the City Couhcil, I invited him to light the City Hall Christmas Tree in 1976. Not only was he the world's greatest entertainer, he was a good man.

From Clyde Wilson, East Reservoir, Victoria

Thank you for your great efforts via the cassette library in getting me Crosby tapes on a regular basis. I still can't believe I have all of Bing's commercial records. To say I am pleased is an understatement.

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CORRECTION

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From Keith Parkinson

SPOKANE RECORDS: In issue 34 of the Crosby Voice, I referred to sales of Spokane Records as 5000 for each album. Larry Kiner, the producer of these albums, has told me that my figure is wildly inaccurate. He says: "I have not yet sold 5000 total discs for the last seven Spokane LP's as yet". My apologies go to Larry and readers of the Crosby Voice for providing the wrong information.

Having said all that, Larry, please go on issuing new albums!

.....

The Melbourne Jazz Repertory Company

presents:

HOAGY, BIX AND BING

An evening's entertainment built around the lives and music of Hoagy Carmichael, Bix Beiderbecke and Bing Crosby.

Venue: Naughty Nineties Music Hall, 675 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn.

MARCH 9, 1[illegible], 16, 1[illegible] & 23

Each evening opens at 7.30 for
an 8.00 start.

BYO license, full meal and supper for

$20 A HEAD

Bookings: Allan Leake 861 5223 Roger Hudson 819 1868

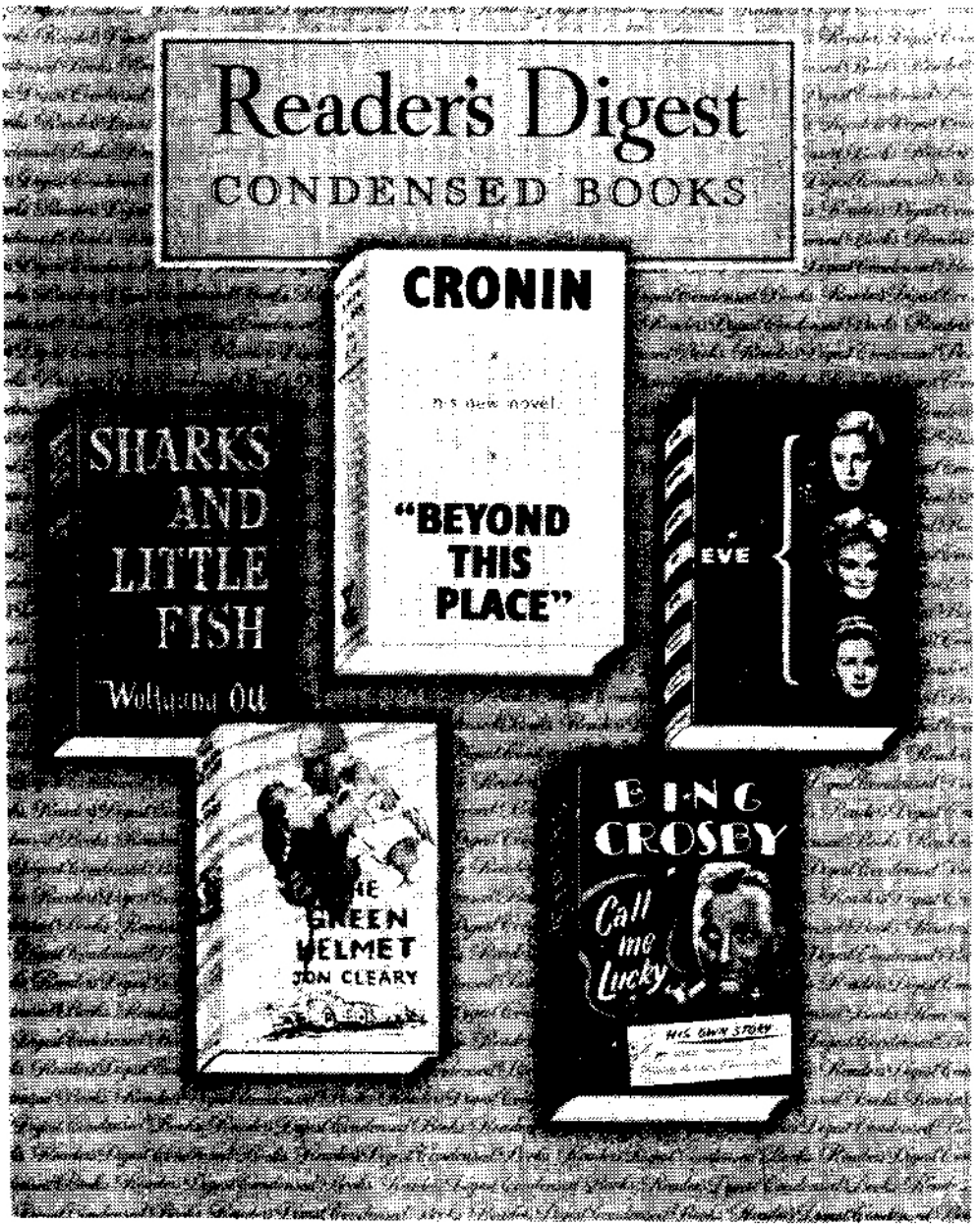
Featuring: Dave Hetherington, Ken Evans, Carol Harris, Beverley Sheehan, Geoff Rule, Roger Hudson, Ian Orr, Harry Price, Allan Leake

and many others

.....

IN MEMORIUM

We sadly note the passing of two of our members in recent times: Joe Crohan and Syd Smyth. Our condolences go to the families.



The original dust cover of the original British issue of the Reader's Digest condensed version of "Call Me Lucky".

Once we had the nugget of a plot, Sennett would start "writing." I use "writing" for want of a better word. He put nothing down on paper. His story was really a series of physical gags. I'd be dunked in a tank and fish would get down my shirt front or quick-rising dough would envelop me in a gooey bubble bath.

I drove out to view the ruins. The house was a shell; the staircases were still there, but the roof was gone. It was during the racing season. I'd won a little on the races and I had two thousand dollars stuck in the toe of a sports shoe in my dressing-room. The ways of the human mind are peculiar. There I was with my home gutted, but as I got out of my car and walked through the ruins, I was thinking only of that loot in my boot. The firemen met me upstairs and followed me down the hall through what was left of my house. I went into my dressing-room, picked up a scorched shoe, reached in and took out the wad I'd stowed in it.

I said good-bye to the firemen, who'd watched me, pop-eyed, and joined my family at Bill Goodwin's. We were feeling pretty blue trying to work out where we'd live when Dave Shelley, a friend, sauntered in. He'd passed the ruins of my house on the way.

"Hi, Bing," he said brightly, "what's new?"

Shortly before my tour was over, I found a memorandum in my hotel post-box which read: "Colonel Galt wants to see you." When I mentioned the message to a friend, he said, "Galt is one of Eisenhower's aides. Chances are the General wants to see you."

"I'd like to see him, too," I answered, "but I don't want him to think he has to entertain every itinerant minstrel who happens to come along."

"If you do see him," my friend said, "and he asks if there's anything you want, why not see if he'll lend you a car for a couple of days?"

Cars were at a premium. The Métro had broken down and the French were all on bicycles. Colonels drove up to the Ritz in small cars, took out chains with links as big as horseshoes and giant locks and hitched their cars to lamp-posts before going in for lunch. I got in touch with Colonel Galt, and the upshot was that our troupe went out to Versailles and did some shows. Then we had luncheon with General Ike and his staff, and since he liked to sing in harmony, we got up a quartet. The General sang baritone.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

'Collectors' Corner' this issue features one of the original releases of Bing's Musical Autobiography set - a boxed set of seventeen 45rpm records. As it was difficult to photograph the actual box, I've reproduced the cover off a special Decca catalogue of the time.

Inside the box, the purchaser received this 24 page booklet containing a list of the titles, photographs of Bing, a short biography and two or three discographies. One featuring an alphabetical listing of all of Bing's Decca recordings available at that time (from August 4th 1934 to August 4th 1954), another listing Bing's LP's, EP's and 78 sets, and a third listing all the commercial titles with accompanying artists.

DECCA RECORDS

Printed in U.S.A.

Each record in this boxed set comes with its own specially printed paper cover as you see above. The actual records, like all American 45 rpm discs, come with this special large centre hole. The disc, of course, has been reduced in size to fit on this page!

THE Q.B.C.S. REPORT

From Les O'Donnell:

The QBCS Christmas Party Festivities took place at the home of our President, Vic Bridger, on Saturday December 7th. The evening started at 7.30 with a buffet dinner with music supplied a la Crosby. At 6.30, Santa and Mrs Claus paid a visit to our tree and handed out presents to the 20 members and 5 guests present.

Highlights of the eveing were a special lucky door prize, a Bing singalong in which all joined in, a Christmas Crosby video tape and supper - accompanied by a great Crosby Christmas cake.

Details of our next meeting are now well in hand. It will be a 'Bing vs The Rest (crooners that is)Programme', to be held at my place on February 8th.

If any of your members are up our way during the year, we would be delighted to welcome them at one of our meetings, or if they contact one of our Committee members, we will even arrange a special meeting for them! (We would also be delighted to see any Queensland members! BM)

Our functions for 1986 are as follows:

Saturday April 12th - Film evening - Peter Traynor's house

Saturday May 10th - Bing's Birthday Picnic Lunch - Ron & Dawn Gillett's property

Saturday June 14th - BBQ plus AGM plus Bing's film music - Vic & Beryl Bridger's house

Saturday August 9th - Video Evening - Les O'Donnell's house

September 13th - Progressive Dinner - Samford area - Dot Cain's house

Saturday October 18th - Musical evening - Tribute to Bing - Les O'Donnell's house

Saturday November 8th - Combined Al Jolson/Bing Crosby night - Abe Cassell's house

Saturday December 13th - Christmas Party - venue not supplied

For details (or if visiting Queensland) contact can be made by ringing:

VIC BRIDGER - 289 1104 LES O'DONNELL - 399 5501 ABE CASSELL - 356 177[illegible]
PETER TRAYNOR - 398 7130

NEW YORK POST, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1985

Bing made Christmas brighter for all of us

RAY KERRISON

EVERY Friday, Marion Love Massey, a middle-aged woman of means, drives up to Holy Cross Cemetery in Westwood, Cal., and places a bouquet of flowers on the grave of Bing Crosby.

The ritual never changes, except on Christmas Day, when she places beside the headstone a small Christmas tree with a snowman smoking a pipe.

This week, for the first time since Crosby died in 1977, Mrs. Massey, the fan who never forgot, missed her usual Christmas remembrance of the crooner.

"She was out of town so she could not make it," said a spokesman for the cemetery. "However, she sent an arrangement of poinsettias instead."

If there is one man the whole world cannot forget at Christmas it is Bing Crosby.

This year, as for every Christmas in the past 40 years, his songs, carols and hymns have dominated the airwaves in New York. It is the same everywhere.

Indeed, without him, the season would not shine so brightly. No mere mortal has left an imprint so universal and so lasting on this feast as the man they called the Old Groaner.

New tastes, new fads, new generations, new players come and go, but after Thanksgiving and at the first appearance of mistletoe, the melody of Christmas belongs only to Bing Crosby.

Who could imagine it without his "White Christmas" or "Silent Night?"

Others have woven their magic. Others like Johnny Mathis, Andy Williams, the late Nat King Cole and Perry Como, but Crosby got there first with the best ("White Christmas" in 1942) and it has been his game ever since.

In vain will you listen for a new wave of Christmas music. Modern rock, with all its spinoffs, variations and adventures, offers nothing that even remotely challenges the established ascendancy of Crosby's Christmas.

There is nothing to challenge the charm and grace and easy elegance of Crosby's baritone or the wave of nostalgia that floods the soul listening to him in the days before December 25.

Crosby's durability is all the more remarkable given the unkind twists of fate that shook him before and after death.

Despite his almost unparalleled success in the entertainment business — he recorded 1500 songs, sold 500 million records, made 70 movies and starred on TV for 20 years — Crosby's career skidded late in life.

He didn't make a movie after 1966 and he couldn't get a recording contract after 1970. He said at the time: "My records don't sell anymore."

When he was stricken with a heart attack on a golf course outside Madrid on Oct. 14, 1977, Crosby's star had been eclipsed.

He was 73 or 74 at the time, depending on what birth certificate you read. One had him born in Tacoma, Wash., on May 2, 1904. Later it was claimed that he was actually born on that date in 1903.

After his death, Crosby's good name and unsullied reputation were splashed with a bucket of mud, some of it from his own son.

In print, Bing was depicted as a tyrannical, abusive father, a heavy drinker, an early womanizer, a man who drove his first wife, Dixie Lee, to booze and an early grave.

This, of course, is now standard revisionist showbiz history. It happens to everyone. The latest victim is Steve McQueen.

Still, despite a collapsed career, his death eight years ago and the unflattering portraits that followed, Bing Crosby remains solidly entrenched as the voice of Christmas for much, if not most, of the world.

It was once said that more people heard his voice than any other man who ever lived. "White Christmas," according to the records, sold more than 19 million copies, rivaled only by Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog."

Bing recorded "White Christmas" in 1942, as part of the film "Holiday Inn" with Fred Astaire. Few songs have traveled as well down through the years.

It retains all the warmth and appeal and freshness as the day it was first sung, which explains why so many young people respond to it.

No man has left a legacy like Bing. He is long gone, but his voice remains to caress the world at Christmas and set its heart aglow.

When Marion Love Massey next goes to Holy Cross Cemetery, today or a week from today, perhaps she could leave an extra rose on Bing's grave, a token for the millions who listened to him this week, sang along with him, drew joy from him and remember him as the first voice of Christmas.

A CROSBY CHRISTMAS WAS ON THE CARDS!

Featuring Bing or references to Bing on Christmas cards has become quite an industry in recent years.

Here are some examples of cards that we received.

The one on the left appears to be a home-made photographic card from one Ragnar Uppman in Sweden! We now have <u>two</u> Swedish members in the society - Ragnar and his fellow countryman Rune Edvardsson.

On the opposite page we have, going clock-wise from the one at the top:

i) The attractive card of The Queensland Bing Crosby Society.

2) The front of this John Sands card is totally white and this message is inside.

3) Inside this unusual Hallmark card from the USA is the message: "Happy Holidays from Bing Cherry" (!)

"I'm dreaming of a white Christmas..."

LETTER BOX

From Rune Edvardsson, Arla, Sweden

I was first awakened to the greatness of Bing Crosby in connection with his passing in 1977 when the Swedish radio played a series of radio programmes presenting Bing. (After that occasion, I doubt whether they have played a single one of his records while our TV has never - believe it or not - showed any film by him! Anyhow, those Bing programmes in 1977 opened my eyes to Bing and as a result I joined the ICC in England and shortly afterwards the Club Crosby in the USA. I am slowly building up a collection of Bing records and where I can't get records, I am contented with open reel or cassette dubbings.

Is it customary for your members to exchange material on tape or reel? Do you know of anybody in your cadre who would like to have a contact in Sweden for the purpose I have outlined?

(WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH RUNE? HIS ADDRESS IS:

Aspvagen 6, 640 43 Arla, Sweden.)

.....

BOB AVERY

1 McAfee Court, North Dandenong, 3175 Victoria (phone (03) 795 5803) has a number of 78's in excellent condition (mostly played with fibre needles) that he wishes to dispose of. Artists include Dick Haymes, Buddy Clark, Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Dorothy Squires, Glenn Miller, etc.

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MORE NEW TAPES IN THE CASSETTE LIBRARY

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I'm delighted to report that British members John Joyce has supplied the club with more radio song tapes from the 1930's, 40's and 50's.

This means that we have no less than EIGHT cassettes in the JJ series.

JJ1, JJ2, JJ3, JJ4, JJ5, JJ6, JJ7 and JJ8. And still more are promised including one featuring rare TV songs and songs from Bing's 'Ford Road Show' series of the late 1950's.

****

WHERE TO BUY THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY

****

MELBOURNE: We recommend the Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh or Cunninghams, 80 Church Street, Brighton because members get a discount there if they ask for it.

But if it is inconvenient for you to travel to either Bentleigh or Brighton, then try Batmans at 370 Lt Bourke St, Black Swan Records at 417 Sturt St, Ballarat, Blue Moon Records, 38 Glenhuntly Rd, Elwood, Cosmos, at 145 Ackland St, St Kilda, Discurio at 20 McKillop St, City, Dizzy Spinners at 330 Brunswick St Fitzroy, Exposure Records at 148 Cotham Rd Kew, Gaslight Records at 85 Bourke St City, Greville Records at 152 Greville St Prahran, Hampton Music Centre 427 Hampton St Hampton, Mostly Jazz at 94 St Kilda Rd St Kilda, Readings at either 153 Toorak Rd South Yarra or 710 Glenferrie Rd Hawthorn, and Thomas' at 95 Bourke St.

SYDNEY: Jazz Plus, 132 Victoria Rd, Rozelle, Palings at 192 Pitt St, City, The Record Collector at Shop 97, Bondi Junction Plaza.

ADELAIDE: John Davis Records, Twin Plaza Avenue, 22 Twin St, City.

CANBERRA: Abel's, Bougainville Street, Manuka.

.....

THE NEW BING CROSBY COLOUR PHOTOCLUB

Frank Murphy advises that the overseas membership rates are now £4.00 instead of the price quoted in our last issue. Sorry to mess you around, Frank.

Frank also writes: "Our first catalogue should be ready in a few months. It is being issued free on receipt of return postage and I suggest that readers of the Crosby Voice send me IRC to the value of 40p to cover this if they would like a copy. The catalogue will list all our current photos - now over 60 colour and 20 b & w, the cassette jackets - now into their third thousand, our mini pics, music tapes, mini-stamps and our big project for the year - a Crosby Calendar for 1987."

For more information, write to Frank at:

32 Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 7NE England.

TRADING POST

REG ANDREWS
B 16 Hunter Connection, 7 - 13 Hunter Street, Sydney, NSW 2000
writes:
"I am going to live overseas and I don't think I will be coming back to Australia. I would like to sell off my collection consisting of many Bing LP's, nostalgia LP's of the artists of the 20's and 30's, Crosby radio shows and much more. I also have several Crosby movies on VHS video (PAL system) plus about eight starring Al Jolson.

As I am leaving the country, I will sell for cheap prices. My phone number for details is (02) 233 1671."

COLIN PUGH
29 Picton Street, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5PZ, England
still requires issues 3,4,5,6,7 and 8 of the Crosby Voice. He is quite happy to borrow copies and photocopy them. Of course Colin will pay all postage costs.

FERNANDO L FIORE
Jose Hernandez 2228 P.B"C". 1426 - Buenos Aires, Argentina
writes:
"I thought that your members might be interested in purchasing some 78's issued by Bing Crosby in Argentina. Price is US$18.00 for each record in VG+ or better including air mail postage. Payment should be by money order on any US Bank in US$$$.

I currently have ten Crosby 78's plus one with Crosby and Al Jolson called "The Spaniard The Blighted My Life" on the White Odeon label in VG+ condition.

There are many other 78's here in Argentina. Please ask for a complete list if you are interested.

I also have three 7" records with picture sleeves. These are all original issues, priced at US$5 each. (Postage is not mentioned. BM)

BING CROSBY CANTA CANCIONES DE JEROME KERN (4 tracks including 'Long Ago and Far Away'. Decca cover VG+, record M-. (?)

"POLVO DE ESTRELLAS" (4 tracks inc. 'The one Rose'. Cover & disc VG+.

"CANCIONES QUEME HUBIEJE GUSTADO CANTAR. Cover VG+, record M-.

BITS 'N' PIECES

* Although nothing to do with things Crosby, I thought that some members might be interested to hear of a new record label here in Melbourne called "Discovery Records". To quote from the cover of their first issue, a 7" EP featuring Gladys Moncrieff's very first four tracks: "It is the aim of Discovery Records to make available in modern form as much as possible of our legacy of sound....we can't promise to let you hear Thomas Edison's very first recording...but we do have many exciting things in store. On Discovery records you will hear, perhaps for the very first time, legendary actors and authors, monarchs and musicians, singers and statesmen. And the sounds of events that have shaped the world."

  The Moncrieff disc is on sale at the Performing Arts Museum for the very modest price of $3.00. You may like to write for details of future releases. The address of Discovery Records is:

  Box 4037, Melbourne, Victoria 3001 Australia.

* Most Crosby collectors will no doubt be aware of the single-sided 78 issue "Why Do I Like You" of which only 1000 autographed (by Bing) copies were ever released. Two mint copies were recently offered in the USA at US$50 each or $125 for the pair! These discs were numbered 970 and 971. Makes you wonder whether all the copies were sold originally as there are many good pressings around. Yours truly has copy number 570, also in excellent condition.
  For those interested, the discs were offered by Rare Records, PO Box 10518, Glendale, California 91209, USA and the records were listed as Item 253 in their 'Jazz 85-9' auction list.

* Member Graham Reade submitted the following from the April 1939 issue of Metronome: "Bing Crosby turned fire-fighter recently when his pipe started a wastepaper basket fire at the Kraft Music Hall rehersals. The waste burned unnoticed until it suddenly flared into a blaze several feet high. Bing pulled a fire extinguisher off the wall and had the fire out before studio guards arrived."

* Al Sutton has stood down as President of the Club Crosby in the USA. Al has done a brilliant job editing 'Bingang' magazine for the past several years and we wish him well.

FROM OUT OF THE PAST

MOVIE OF THE WEEK:

Road to Utopia

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope gag up the Klondike gold rush

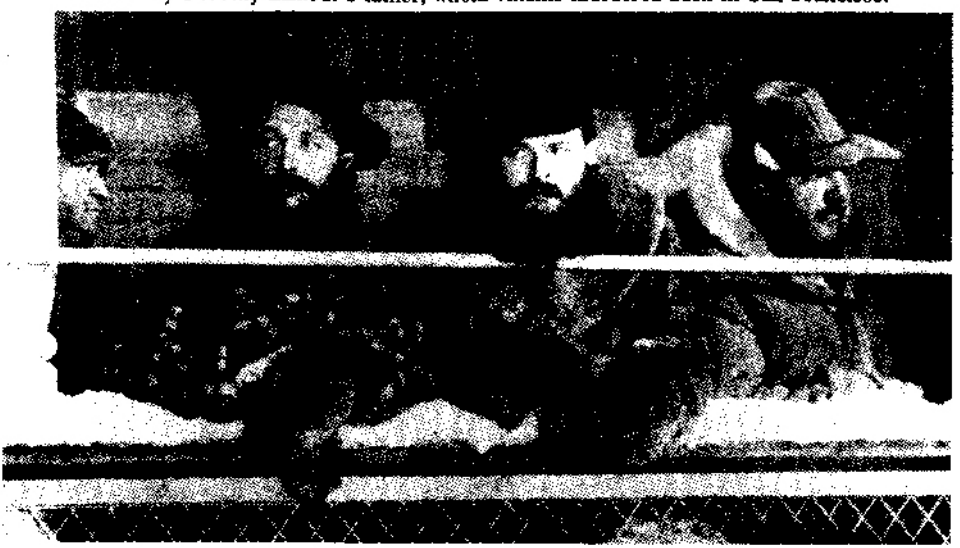
Road to Utopia is the fourth "Road" picture for Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. On previous excursions they ended up in Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco. This time their destination is Alaska during the Klondike gold rush. Crosby and Hope are a vaudeville team who are forced to leave San Francisco. They go to Alaska, get hold of a map of a gold mine, meet Dorothy Lamour (a pure-hearted bar-room singer) and ultimately escape from the villains after two mad chases.

This creaky plot is only a framework on which Hope and Crosby hang their preposterous gags. Like most Crosby-Hope pictures, *Road to Utopia* is a collection of all the comedy ideas, new and old, which the co-stars and a handful of writers could think up or remember during the two months it took to make the movie. The plot and locale are discarded whenever they get in the way of a laugh. Present-day references are made to Crosby's voice ("Who could be selling fish at this hour?"), to their employers (an Alaskan mountain appears surrounded by stars and the trade mark, "Paramount Pictures"), to current developments (Lamour: "You're facetious." Hope: "Keep politics out of this!") If one gag fails, no harm is done because another one comes along in ten seconds.

BOB HOPE AND BING CROSBY sit fishing through the ice in the middle of the Alaskan wilderness. Crosby catches 14 fish. Hope gets none. After Crosby leaves, a fish rises to surface and asks where Crosby has gone. In addition to the talking fish, *Road to Utopia* has a bear which plays a whole scene in pantomime, winds up by complaining that a fish gets more lines than he does. The most amusing animal does not talk, however. It is a shaggy dog which trots after Hope with a stick of dynamite in its mouth.

GAGS: Hope mistakes a bear for a girl (*top*) and mutters, "I'll get you real furs. You won't have to wear this cheap imitation." Middle: Lamour wears sarong in snow, kisses Hope so passionately he melts snowdrift. Bottom: Santa Claus rides by at odd moment.

THE VILLAINS, Sperry and McGurk, trap Bing Crosby and Bob Hope in a stateroom on the ship to Alaska. The latter have just found the map to a fabulous gold mine discovered by Dorothy Lamour's father, whom villains murdered back in San Francisco.



THE HEROES outwit Sperry and McGurk, paste beards on and assume the villains' identities (*above*). Everyone in Skagway kowtows to them.

IN THE LAST CHANCE SALOON Crosby and Hope run into more trouble after Sperry and McGurk perish in avalanche started off by a slight hiccough from Hope.

SALOON BLOWS UP after Hope and Crosby escape from it, leaving behind them a lighted stick of dynamite brought by dog. Now they flee from a gang of cutthroats.

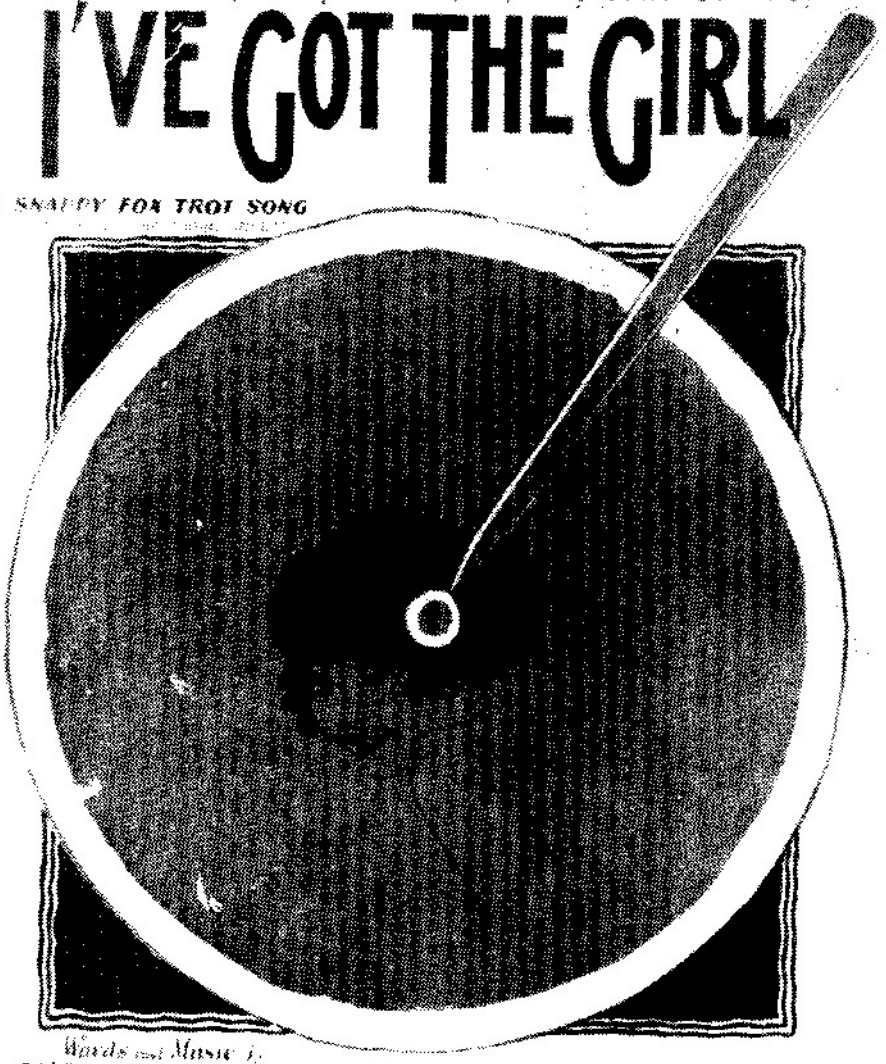
Dorothy Lamour thinking they are father's murderers, vamps Crosby and Hope, trying to get map.

CHASE ENDS when Hope and Lamour are separated from Crosby by a sudden crevasse. They have the map and he must face enraged pursuers. Hope and Lamour live happily ever after in luxury thinking Crosby is dead. Finally, aged 70, he shows up with two blondes, discovers that Hope and Lamour's son looks exactly like Crosby.

Oh! Those Lips, Oh! Those Eyes, Oh! Can't You See?

I'VE GOT THE GIRL

A SNAPPY FOX TROT SONG



Words and Music by
WALTER DONALDSON

LEO FEIST, INC. NEW YORK

BACK PAGE SPECIAL

This is where it all began: the sheet music of Bing's first-ever record in October of 1926.